



Puu o Mahuka Heiau on Oahu's North Shore. Photo credit to Joel Bradshaw.

Oahu's largest heiau, a Hawaiian religious temple, is Puu O Mahuka. You'll find this temple perched on a hill overlooking Waimea Bay on the North Shore. It's definitely worth a 20 minute or so diversion from Highway 83 to visit it. Educational plaques are stationed by the heiau. This diversion is also worthy because of views.

It is estimated that this temple was built in the 1600s. This heiau was probably used for religious services until the religious kapu (taboo) system was abolished by the Hawaiian ruler in 1819. Sacrifices were offered to the gods here. Traditionally, food offerings were presented to the gods, but it is reported that human sacrifices may have also been offered here. For more



Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau State Monument

Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau State Historic Site on the North Shore of O'ahu is the largest heiau on the island,^[3] covering 2 acres (8,100 m²) on a hilltop overlooking Waimea Bay and Waimea Valley. **Pu'u o Mahuka** means 'Hill of Escape'. Hawaiian legends have it that from this point, Pele (Volcano Goddess) leaped from Oahu to the next island, Molokai. From its commanding heights, sentries could once monitor much of the northern shoreline of O'ahu, and even spot signal fires from the Wailua Complex of Heiaus on Kaua'i, with which it had ties. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962, when it became the center of a 4-acre (16,000 m²) State park. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.^[4]

The highest of the three walled enclosures may date to the 17th century, with the lower two enclosures perhaps added during the 18th century. These were times of great conflict, and the upper platform appears to have functioned as a heiau luakini (sacrificial temple) to bring success in war. During the 1770s, the overseer of this heiau was Ka'opolupulu, the high priest of the last independent high chief of O'ahu, Kahāhana. In 1792, George Vancouver's ship, HMS Daedalus, anchored near Waimea Bay to collect water. Three men in his shore party were killed in a skirmish with Native Hawaiians, and may have been taken to the heiau as human sacrifices. After Kamehameha I conquered O'ahu in 1795, his high priest Hewahewa led religious ceremonies here and the heiau remained in use until the traditional kapu system was abolished in 1819.^[4]

The first new moon after the Pleiades (Makali'i) as seen from Kaena Point, rising out of Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau just after sunset, mark the beginning of Makahiki, the four months of Hawaiian New Year.

The site can be reached from Pupukea Homestead Road (Highway 835), which starts at Kamehameha Highway (Highway 83) across from Pupukea fire station.

Gallery

Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau

U.S. National Register of Historic Places

U.S. National Historic Landmark



Main platform at Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau



Nearest city	Haleiwa, Hawaii
Area	2 acres (8,100 m ²)
Built	17th century
NRHP reference #	66000292 (https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/66000292) ^[1]

Significant dates

Added to NRHP	October 15, 1966
Designated NHL	December 29, 1962 ^[2]



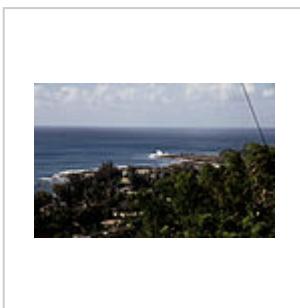
Panoramic view of Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau



View from top corner toward Ka'ena Point



View from top corner looking north



View toward Shark's Cove



Lower wall and pathway



View across Waimea Valley



Visitor altar with guardian rooster

References

1. "National Register Information System" (http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natreg/docs/All_Data.html). *National Register of Historic Places*. National Park Service. 2007-01-23.
 2. "Puu O Mahuka Heiau" (<http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/detail.cfm?ResourceID=183&ResourceType=Structure>). *National Historic Landmark summary listing*. National Park Service. Retrieved 2008-07-04.
 3. Fournier, Rasa. "[Hiking Puu O Mahuka Heiau](https://www.hawaii.com/oahu/things-to-do/hiking/puu-o-mahuka-heiau/)" (<https://www.hawaii.com/oahu/things-to-do/hiking/puu-o-mahuka-heiau/>). *Hawaii.com*. Retrieved 27 May 2018.
 4. "[Hawaii State Parks: Oahu: Pu'u o Mahuka Heiau State Historic Site](http://www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/oahu/index.cfm?park_id=28)" (http://www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/oahu/index.cfm?park_id=28). Retrieved 2010-01-09.
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